

Helping Farmers Weather Crisis

By JDES Communications
June 08, 2015



The risks inherent to farming are many. There are many elements that a farmer can't control, like weather, yields, and commodity prices. Farmers are famously self-reliant, known for their incredible work ethic and resiliency to persevere in the face of unfavorable conditions. When injury or illness keeps a farmer or farm family out of the field for even a few days, it can mean disaster for the business.

Tom Meyer, director, Enterprise Product Delivery Process and the Program Management Office, and a few of his Deere-retiree friends, spent a week in May in North Dakota, helping three farm families get their crops in the ground. They did so through a program called Farm Rescue.

Farm Rescue is a North Dakota-based nonprofit that brings together people and equipment to provide planting, harvesting, and haying assistance free of charge to family farmers who have suffered a major injury, illness, or natural disaster. The equipment is an array of premium John Deere machines, provided exclusively by RDO Equipment Co., based in Fargo. The people are a team of volunteers, assembled by Farm Rescue, like Tom and his friends.

"Farm Rescue helps farm families in crisis throughout the upper Midwest," says Tom. "I ran an air seeder crew led by Mark Baumgarten, a John Deere retiree in his third year of volunteering for Farm Rescue, and retirees Ken Enstrom and Rick McAnally."

The crew worked for a week, planting over 1,400 acres for three families in crisis. See news coverage and video of the effort:

- [KX News Minot, May 4](#)
- [KX News Minot, May 6](#)
- [KMOT TV Minot](#)
- [A video from Farm Rescue](#)

"The families we worked with included a farmer who broke his back right at the start of seeding, and two families with members going through cancer treatments," says Tom. "We helped them get their crops in the ground."

Tom is an advocate for Deere's [Dollars for Doers](#) program, which provides \$1,000 grants to non-profit organizations that an employee volunteers with for 40 hours in a fiscal year.

"Farm Rescue was a great opportunity to not only help people, but also volunteer enough time to earn the \$1,000 from Dollars for Doers," says Tom. "It's also a chance to operate our equipment, work with our customers, work with the dealer, and work with the other people in the community. It was a real special opportunity to be able to work in that way."

Tom feels the experience has given him a deeper understanding of customers.

"Every time I'm on a farm I learn something new. We didn't just run the seeder, we did the transporting of the equipment, made the repairs, filled the fluids, helped move the fertilizer and the seed - we did everything that the farmer would be doing. It helps me to understand not only the state-of-the-art equipment provided by RDO, but the environment that it works in."

The strength of the Farm Rescue organization, the generosity of RDO Equipment Co., the kindness of the program sponsors and individual donors, and the dedication of the volunteers boils down to one goal: keeping a farm family going through crisis. Emotion overcomes Tom when he describes the experience.

"The families that we work with are very appreciative and happy to have us here," says Tom. "Neighbors and family members bring lunch out to us. They invite us into their homes. They come out and help us any way they can and thank us over and over again. People in the community come up to thank us for being here to help out their neighbors. The community is very supportive."

Learn more about Farm Rescue at FarmRescue.org and about RDO Equipment Co. at RDOEquipment.com.



Thank you to Tom Meyer, Mark Baumgarten, Ken Enstrom and Rick McAnnally. Your volunteerism to this cause has a special place in my heart as my family farm received assistance back in 2011 from Farm Rescue. At the time my dad was battling Pancreatic Cancer and was recovering from surgery in Rochester, MN. In spite of it being an extremely wet year Farm Rescue came in and was able to seed about 300 acres, which was a huge relief for my family. Bill Gross, founder of Farm Rescue and his entire team of volunteers were so generous and giving of their time. Thank you again!

By Christina Nelson 22-Jun-2015



Thanks, Tom, for what you do and for sharing the story with the rest of us!

By James Palmer 19-Jun-2015



Thanks for sharing this story! This is a wonderful example of a great idea by RDO implemented with a team of considerate and caring volunteers, and the amazing support of the JD Foundation in the Dollars for Doers program.

By Denise Harmsen 19-Jun-2015



Thanks, Tom, for this inspiring example of giving of your time and talents. Everyone involved with the Farm Rescue program has their heart and soul in it and you are no exception.

By Adrienne Olson 17-Jun-2015



Really very great initiative. Farm Rescue video is really heart touching. Feeling very proud to work for John Deere.

By Sanjeev Hallale 16-Jun-2015



Excellent initiative and support. Proud to be part of John Deere.

By Sweta Sinha 16-Jun-2015



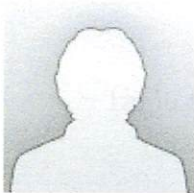
Great article! RDO has taken this initiative nearly a decade ago and has been part of their community effort in the Dakotas to support small grain customers that are in crisis. It is great to see several company, current and retirees supporting this as volunteers. Great thanks to the Offutt family to being supportive as they are in and near their communities as outreach support.

By Gregory Frazier 15-Jun-2015



This is a great organization that has helped families across the midwest. I hope Farm Rescue continues to grow geographically over time. The impact this organization has had on the farming community in North Dakota has been huge. Families that lost a father were able to still have income from the farm, parents with children battling cancer were able to be at the hospital with their child instead of in the fields while not losing all their income. Truly a great organization.

By Erin Welken 15-Jun-2015



A great initiative to learn from.

By Paz Garcia 12-Jun-2015



Good man and nice team and thanks for sharing the story...

By Forester Yang 11-Jun-2015

It's things like this that continue to boost the pride factor in working with John Deere. Tom sets a great example for service beyond the "day job." Thanks Tom for being a true inspiration!

By Jennifer Vrban 10-Jun-2015

I can definitely see Ken doing this, as when he worked here at Engine Works, he was always going the extra mile. GREAT article!

By Larry Wyckoff 10-Jun-2015



This sounds like a great organization! Thanks for sharing the story.

By Beth Peace 09-Jun-2015



Well done Tom, Ken, Mark, and Rick. It sounds like fun and well worth the time and effort. Thanks.

By Russell Walker 09-Jun-2015



I had also become aware of this group recently. Here is a full program on the program and the heart of what they do: <http://www.byutv.org/watch/66190f0c-0723-4d53-85d5-883d958715e3/turning-point-farm-rescue>

By Brian Weinert 09-Jun-2015



This is the true strength of living in the Midwest. People helping people. This makes me proud to work for John Deere.

By William Sharp 09-Jun-2015



Very inspirational!

By Daniel Wisner 09-Jun-2015



So proud to know the Company is supporting these extraordinary efforts and learn about my friends Mark, Ken and Rick also helping... Great work and thanks a lot for sharing Tom.

By Jose Roberto Santos 09-Jun-2015